

Caboolture Bridge Club

History of our CLUBHOUSE

by Derek Stringfellow

It is a great benefit for a bridge club to own its own clubhouse. Not having to carry tables and chairs from storage areas and set up before each session and return to storage after each session, as well as bringing all the playing equipment usually from a member's house.

Early Days

The Club commenced play at the Senior Citizens' hall with the first game being held on 26th October 1981. The committee was comprised of Tony Grant-Smith as President, Dot and Ron Cork, Ruby Cross and Jack Gillies.

When allocated room at the Senior Citizens' hall soon became too small, play shifted to the Anglican Church hall which was a good venue until the Church commenced youth activities and the Hall was not available until after 8.15pm. In the later 1980's the Club moved to the Caboolture Bowls Club for evening sessions (Mon. and Thur.), but as it was not available for Sat. afternoon sessions, these were held in Ruby Cross's double garage. This arrangement was satisfactory until the Bowls Club installed poker machines in 1990. Alternative venues were limited and cost more than twice the Bowls Club rental to hire, and places to purchase (Lutheran hall in Valley Drive) were way above what the Bridge Club could afford.

A Building of Our Own

In Nov. 1992 Derek Stringfellow noted that Telecom had moved their works depot from Newman Street and that Mr Alex Peden had purchased the site for redevelopment. Derek realised that the building on site would be sold for removal and would be sought after by other organisations. Although not as big as he would have liked, it would still provide a 10 table playing area which could be extended to 14 tables using the supper room. Derek approached Alex and got a verbal agreement for the Bridge Club to purchase the building for \$4,000. Derek took this proposal to a Committee meeting on 4th Dec. 1992, and a decision was deferred to the next meeting for a funding proposal to be tabled.

Derek negotiated a lease proposal with the Council for a clubhouse site next to the Girl Guides building on the Rafting Ground Park in Short Street. A 40 year lease was granted at a fee of \$1 per year with a condition of the lease to be that land rates would not be charged. Treasurer Noel Board established that the ABF would make a loan of \$10,000 and the QBA a loan of \$5,000 with each loan for a 10 year term at 8% interest, subject to the club affiliating and registering at least 20 new affiliated members. This information re funding and lease availability was tabled at a meeting on 14th Jan. 1993. The matter was again deferred while the number of possible new affiliated members could be ascertained.

This was a problem, as those who were prepared to pay the annual membership fee for affiliation were already affiliated as members of Moreton-Bribie Bridge Club. Knowing that the Club had a good chance of getting the 20 required members, Derek contacted Alex Peden to advise him the Club would be in position to buy the building in the coming month. Alex replied that as he had not heard from the Bridge Club for over 3 months, he was in talks to sell the building for \$10,000 to a church group. Following a vigorous discussion, Alex agreed to sell the building to the Bridge Club for \$4250 with Alex to retain two air conditioners. At a



Committee meeting on 14th March 1993 it was resolved to purchase the building, seek the lease on the Rafting Ground Park site and seek affiliation with ABF.

As the building had to be moved immediately, Eunice and Derek Stringfellow made an interest free loan of \$8,000 to pay for the \$7,000 relocation cost by Eddie Wright House Removals and incidental costs.

As approval of the loans was still some months away, Alice and Noel Board made an interest free loan of \$5,730 to cover the costs of restumping and the purchase of materials for renovations.

During the renovation of the Telecom depot building, the carpentry work to remove and alter walls, and install fittings to provide the playing hall, kitchen area and toilets was carried out by Bob Gardner, John Lemcke, Noel Board and Derek S, while the connection of the building to the water supply and to the sewerage system was carried out by Noel B, Art Vanwensveen and Derek S using a backhoe and driver supplied free to the Club by Ernie Alzino.

The final cost of establishing the clubhouse including all the necessary furniture and kitchen equipment was \$19,200 plus the many hours of working bee effort by many members. All loans were paid out during the 1st half 1996.

Ruby Cross, the main mover for the formation of the Caboolture Bridge Club, performed the opening ceremony on 25th Sept. 1993.

The Telecom works depot was made from 3 Army huts which were made for an Army camp built in Victoria Park Brisbane in late 1939. When the camp was demolished in 1948, Telecom transported 3 huts to Newman Street Caboolture, joined them together and renovated them to form offices and a lunch room for Caboolture Telecom

After using the clubhouse for 9 years and with the new clubhouse under construction, the Committee approved the sale of the initial clubhouse to Mrs P McMillan for \$2,000 on 2nd March 2002. Mrs McMillan relocated the building to a property facing onto the Kilcoy – Esk road, not far past the Kilcoy cemetery, where the road takes a sweeping curve to the south. The building was placed on the top of a fairly high ridge about 500 meters back from the road. The photo on the wall in the existing clubhouse is of the first clubhouse when it was located next to the Girl Guides building.



A Growing Club

During 1996 playing numbers increased with 10 plus tables at a session regularly and one session with 13 tables. The Committee commenced clubhouse extension planning.

Derek tabled a plan of an addition to the building showing the playing area being doubled, which was approved by the Committee and a building application was lodged with Caboolture Shire Council, and a building permit was issued in Nov. 1997. Building work was deferred when Main Roads advised that it was planning traffic light controls for the King St – Charles St intersection. This meant that Short Street would be extended through the Rafting Ground Park and through the proposed Bridge Club extension site. Main Roads Dept. relocated the building to the site of our current clubhouse and the Club reclaimed their hall in Feb 2001.

New Clubrooms

With a growing membership and the need for modernisation, Derek tabled a layout plan for a new clubhouse which was approved by the Committee and a new building application was lodged in March 2001. However Council now required a Town Planning application which delayed the issue of the building permit until Dec 2001. Hugh Gehrman did the structural design for the new clubhouse and prepared the tender documents. Both Derek and Hugh did the design and planning work at no cost to the club. At a meeting on 14th March 2002, the

Committee accepted the tender of R & L Gread for \$165,783 + GST to construct the new clubhouse. This cost was well over estimate due to the delay of over a year caused by the town planning application and a period of building cost inflation. For example carpentry costs increased from \$18 to \$32 per hour.

The Fit Out

To counteract this increase in costs, Committee members attended auctions and purchased requirements at greatly reduced prices. New carpet was purchased at the auction of remnant carpet rolls for \$44 per square metre as compared with Andersens Carpets quoted price of \$76 per square metre. Chairs and tables in good condition were purchased at a closing down auction of a motel on Coronation Drive, Brisbane, and good quality crockery, cutlery, glassware, jugs, dishes, tables etc were purchased at about 10% of new prices at the Wamuran Mango Tree closing down sale. This enabled air conditioning to be installed. The cost of building the new clubhouse including all fittings and air conditioning was \$193,000 and the funding was as follows:

- Government agencies - \$69,244 (35.9%)
- Shire council grant \$41,400 (21.5%)
- Club funds (after Council interest free loan was paid) \$82,356 (42.6%).



The new clubhouse was jointly opened by ABF President Keith McDonald and Carryn Sullivan State MP for Pumicestone on 31st Aug. 2002.

Today

The Caboolture Bridge Club members are still greatly enjoying having their own clubhouse. For most of the last 28 years they have been able to walk in each session with little or no movement required for the table setup. Not having to pay rental charges each session has resulted in the Club having a credit balance of over \$113,000 at the Bank (as at August 2020). Having this funding available will ease the problem for a future club Committee when a decision has to be made to extend or relocate at some future date.